



6/14/2022

To the Honorable members of our Michigan Legislature;

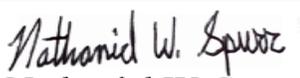
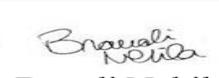
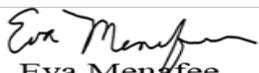
With respect for the cultural inheritance of our Anishinaabek neighbors, and enthusiasm for beneficial contributions to the shared heritage of the state of Michigan, we urge that our lawmakers approve House Bill 4596 (2022) to officially designate **Manoomin as Michigan Native Grain**.

Wild rice, a native grain scientifically designated as the two strains *Zizania palustris* and *Zizania aquatica*, is referred to as manoomin in the indigenous language of the Anishinaabek. In translation, manoomin means “good berry.” The meaning of the name attests to the centrality of the grain to traditional and contemporary Great Lakes indigenous culture: community cohesion, commerce, agricultural practices, healthful sustenance, and cultural and historic lineage all contribute to Anishinaabek consideration of manoomin as sacred. House Bill 4596 respectfully acknowledges the importance of manoomin to indigenous peoples of Michigan and enhances opportunities for all Michiganders to learn about and take pride in our state’s unique legacy.

Designation of Manoomin as Michigan Native Grain would increase public awareness of wild rice. This would contribute to the teaching of Michigan History in our public-school curriculum, as well as providing high-interest lessons in the natural sciences. The public at large will be more likely to recognize the significance of manoomin, as well as how to identify the grain in the wild – both of which could help prevent unwitting destruction of the grain and thus aid in the restoration efforts currently undertaken by all 12 federally recognized tribes of Michigan. These tribes have all endorsed the initiative proposed by HB 4596 as of May 2019.

Michigan, as the iconic Great Lakes State, is well suited to welcoming manoomin as an important aspect of our unique regional identity. Wild rice, the state’s only native grain, is another living symbol of what makes Michigan a special place to live in and to visit. With Great Lakes pride, we urge the passage of House Bill 4596.

Respectfully,

 Andrea Pierce Chair	 Nathaniel W. Spurr Vice Chair	 Julie Dye Secretary	 Brandi Nehila Treasurer
 Eva Menafee Interim Treasurer			